



## **Governor's ESSA Advisory Committee October 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

### **OPENING**

- The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.
- Secretary of Education Steven Godowsky and Committee Chair Matthew Burrows welcomed Committee members and thanked them for the role they are playing to provide feedback on the Delaware Department of Education's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan.

### **COMMITTEE OVERVIEW**

- Each Committee member introduced himself or herself.
- The meeting facilitator explained the background of the Committee and its role:
  - Created by Executive Order #62
  - The Committee will provide written feedback on the Department of Education's draft ESSA plan.
  - The Committee will NOT vote on or write the ESSA plan. The Committee operates in an advisory function.
  - The Committee will meet October 19, November 17 and January 11. The Committee may, with a majority vote, coordinate with the Chair and Department to convene additional meetings.
  - The Committee's feedback will be provided to the Department both in summary form and unedited.
  - The Committee's meetings are public, so all presentations and comments are public and on the record.
  - Delaware plans to submit its ESSA plan by the March 6, 2017 deadline outlined in the U.S. Department of Education's proposed regulations for implementation in the 2017-18 school year. (The other deadline is July 5, 2017.)

### **ESSA OVERVIEW**

- Alex Nock of the Penn Hill Group provided an ESSA overview for Committee members.
- ESSA has major differences from No Child Left Behind, such as more flexibility for states on designing accountability and school improvement systems, setting interventions for low-performing schools, and measuring the progress of English Language Learners.
- Mr. Nock covered the major parts of the law:
  - Title I does not require removing principals or teachers, and 7 percent of Delaware's Title I allocation must be set aside for improving the lowest-performing schools. Delaware's Title I allocation is \$46 million.
  - States also must set goals for student achievement. English Language Learners' proficiency in English must now be counted in state accountability systems.

- Title II funds teacher quality and development, class size reduction, and other programs to prepare and retain teachers and leaders.
- Title IV combines a number of separate programs into a single grant. It continues grants like the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers and charter school programs. However, funding for this part of the law has not been finalized.
- In response to Committee members' questions, Mr. Nock explained that the charter school funds were for start-up programming and facilities. In addition, ESSA eliminated the uniform federal "highly qualified teacher" requirement, but required states to set their own definitions of "highly qualified," which in most cases will cover how teachers are certified.
- ESSA requires states to continue with their federal equity plans, which are aimed to provide high-need schools with greater numbers of highly effective teachers.
- The U.S. Department of Education received 21,000+ comments to proposed regulations to implement ESSA. Delaware's plans will hinge on the final form of those regulations, so the ESSA plan may have to change if Delaware continues to follow its timeline of a March 2017 submission.
  - In response to Committee members' questions, Mr. Nock explained that the U.S. Department of Education is motivated to have the regulations finalized by December so states can meet the March submission deadline. The Department has received requests from many stakeholders to delay the submission dates.
  - In response to Committee members' questions, Secretary Godowsky explained that Delaware wants to submit in March so the plan will be approved before the start of the 2017-18 school year.
  - Mr. Nock also explained that the U.S. Department of Education's regulations on "supplement, not supplant" for Title I funds likely will not affect the Committee's work. He explained that the federal department is looking for spending levels to be equal between schools that receive Title I funds and those that do not, and has given states four proposed options to measure spending levels.
- Delaware's accountability system will have to measure academic growth, academic progress, graduation rates, English language proficiency, and an indicator of school quality that is the state's choice, such as Advanced Placement course-taking, school climate surveys, or other valid measures.
- Secretary Godowsky explained that Delaware, like the federal government, will have a new chief executive and a new secretary of education. The transition may affect Delaware's ESSA timeline.

## **OVERVIEW OF DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S ESSA PLANNING TO DATE**

- Deputy Secretary of Education Karen Field Rogers presented the Delaware Department of Education's work to date on ESSA planning:
  - A team of 50 staff members has been working to understand the law and how to implement it.
  - The Department has asked the public for feedback via:
    - Meetings with more than 20 existing groups representing a variety of stakeholders
    - Four "Community Conversations"
    - Two subject-matter ESSA discussion groups (student and school supports, and measures of school success and public reporting)
    - General survey on the web site
    - Five additional Community Conversations in November and December
    - Governor's ESSA Advisory Committee
  - The Department will have a draft plan released on or about the end of October, a second draft released on or about the end of December, and a final version by March. The draft plan in October will have gaps that Delaware will want feedback in answering.
- In response to Committee members' questions, Ms. Rogers explained that the Community Conversations drew diverse audiences, and at the second round of Community Conversations (starting in November), stakeholders can comment on the draft plan.
- All meeting summaries are on the Department of Education's web site.

The Committee broke up into four small groups to answer two questions: What is the most important thing that Delaware should accomplish for its schools through its ESSA plan? And which of the five major areas of the ESSA plan would members most like to review? The areas are:

- Supporting Excellent Educators for All Students
- Challenging Academic Standards and Assessments
- Measures of School Success and Public Reporting
- School Support and Improvement
- Supporting All Students

Each group discussed members' priorities and then reported out:

- Group #1 priorities: equitable funding
- Group #2 priorities: the timing of the plan submission and the selection of the indicator of school quality in the accountability system
- Group #3 priorities: upholding rigor, providing support for educators, and maintaining flexibility for schools and districts
- Group #4 priorities: supporting excellent educators, committing to equity of access and opportunity, and using ESSA flexibility to drive change

## **CONCLUSION**

The next meeting will be November 17 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the same location. Committee members will receive a copy of the draft plan with instructions and guiding questions.

Three members of the public spoke. Speakers discussed the lack of flexibility in ESSA, the timing of the plan submission, and the unrealistic expectations to close all achievement gaps.

Committee Chair Burrows adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.